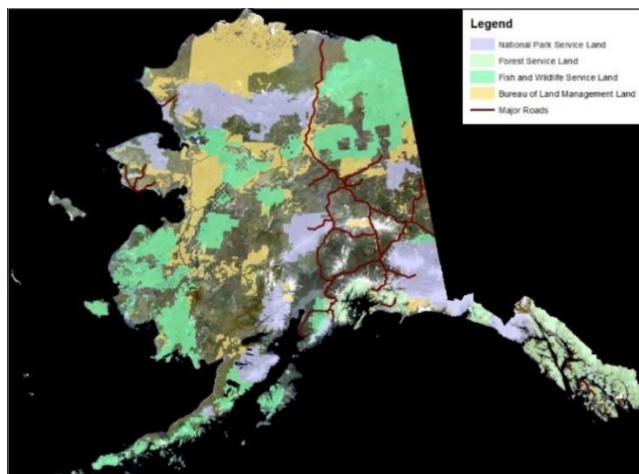




Overview

A survey was administered during summer 2016 at Federal lands in Alaska managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), National Park Service (NPS), US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and US Forest Service (USFS; defined as Federal Land Management Agencies [FLMAs]), Alaska Public Lands Information Centers (APLICs), an inter-agency visitor center (IAVC), and on the Alaska Marine Highway System Ferry. The overall purpose of the survey effort was to collect data on visitors' transportation-related experiences to inform FLMAs' long-range transportation planning.



The survey consisted of two parts: an onsite survey and a follow-up survey. The questions were designed to gather information on the following themes:

- Modes of transportation used
- Transportation satisfaction
- Sites visited and activity participation
- Information sources used and their helpfulness
- Infrastructure satisfaction and preferences
- Safety concerns and incidents
- Suggestions for improving travel

Methods

The survey was administered across a large geographic area of Alaska at 20 sites (or units), distributed across FLMAs as follows:

- NPS – 5 sites
- BLM – 2 sites
- USFS – 5 sites
- Multiagency (APLIC & IAVC) – 5 sites
- FWS – 3 sites

Within each site, there were several intercept locations, selected purposively in order to sample a range of visitor types. Each FLMA provided the list of sites and suggestions for specific intercept locations within the site.

The onsite survey was administered via paper or iPad. After the onsite survey was completed, the respondent was asked if they were willing to participate in the follow-up survey, and were given the option of a paper survey or a web-based survey. Residents were mailed/emailed the follow-up survey within a week. Non-residents were asked when they were leaving Alaska, with the follow-up survey mailed/emailed after they left Alaska.

Results

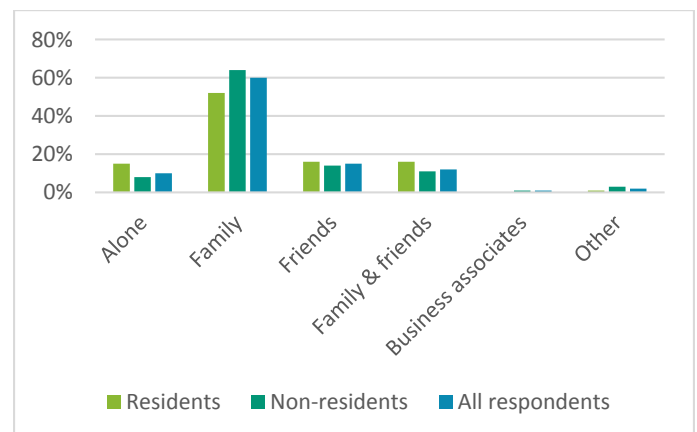
Eighty percent of visitors contacted agreed to participate in the survey. Two thousand seven hundred ninety-six respondents were recreational visitors and 247 were non-recreational visitors (i.e. working or commuting). Five hundred twenty-nine visitors responded to the follow-up survey.

Characteristics of Respondents

Thirty percent (838) of the recreational onsite surveys were completed by residents and 70% (1,958) by non-residents. Of the non-residents, 81% were from the United States, but not Alaska. California was the most often listed state (14% of non-resident visitors from the U.S.) and Canada the most frequently cited country (39% of non-U.S. visitors). Of the recreational visitors, onsite respondents were evenly split between male and female (51% and 50%, respectively) with no significant gender differences between residents and non-residents. Most residents (99%) were traveling independently. Among non-residents, 65% reported traveling independently, 20% as part of a pre-purchased package tour, and 15% both independently and as part of a pre-purchased package tour. Forty-two percent of residents were on a day trip. All non-residents stayed at least one day in Alaska, with 56% staying 3 – 14 nights and 43% staying 15 or more nights.

Traveling Companions

Most visitors were traveling with some combination of family and friends (84% and 89% for residents and non-residents, respectively).

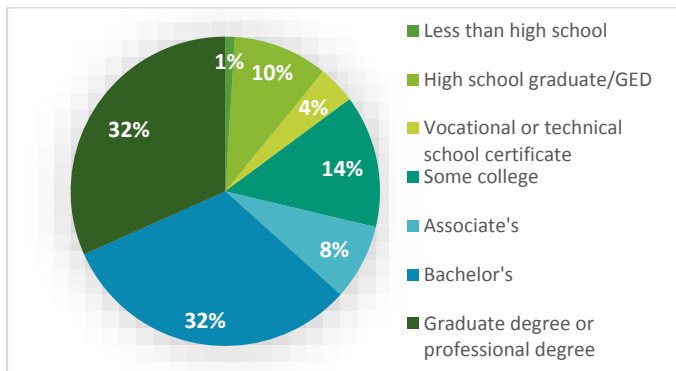


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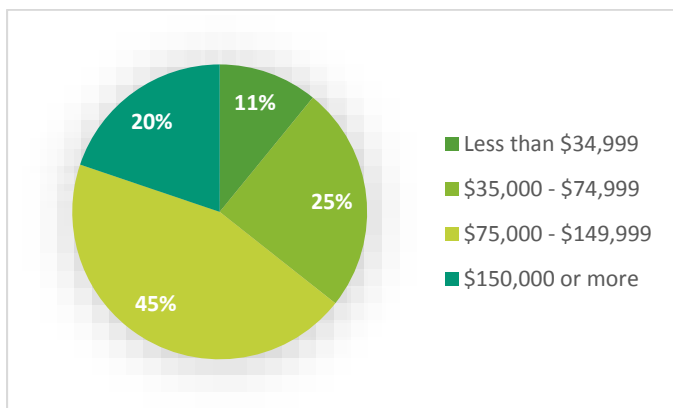
Education

Onsite respondents reported a high education level (i.e., relative to the U.S. population as a whole), with 64% indicating a Bachelor's degree or higher.



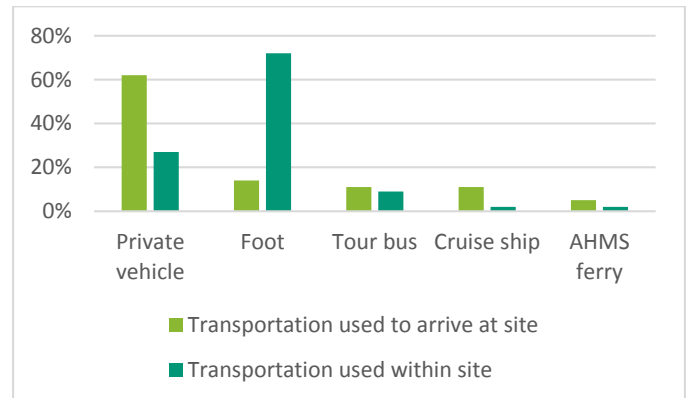
Income Level

Onsite respondents tended to have a relatively high income. Nearly two-thirds of respondents live in households that earn \$75,000 or more in annual household income, and 20% have household family incomes of \$150,000 or more. Non-residents are more likely than residents to be among the highest income group (13% vs. 5%).



Transportation

Nearly two-thirds of visitors arrived at the site using a private vehicle, but residents were significantly more likely to use this form of transportation than non-residents (92% vs. 49%, respectively). All other forms of transportation used to arrive at the site were used by significantly fewer respondents, with notable differences by residency for a commercial shuttle and tour bus (non-residents were more likely to indicate using those forms of transportation).



Respondents indicated they were satisfied with their travel experience arriving at the site and within the site. In both cases, roughly two-thirds (62% and 65%, respectively) rated the experience as "excellent," and nearly one-third (32% and 30%, respectively) rated it as "good."

Infrastructure

Respondents were presented with 10 types of transportation/travel-related infrastructure and were asked if they would like to see "less," "the same," or "more." A "no opinion" response option was also provided. "No opinion" was a prevalent response, and was excluded from analysis. Of those expressing a preference, with the exception of trails for all-terrain vehicles, the majority of respondents preferred the current levels. Infrastructure with notable percentages of respondents indicating a preference for "more" included: trails for hiking, biking, and horseback riding (46%); campgrounds (36%); accessible friendly sites and facilities (34%); and directional or wayfinding signs (33%). A plurality of respondents (44%) indicated a preference for "less" trails for all-terrain vehicles, with 16% indicating a preference for "more."

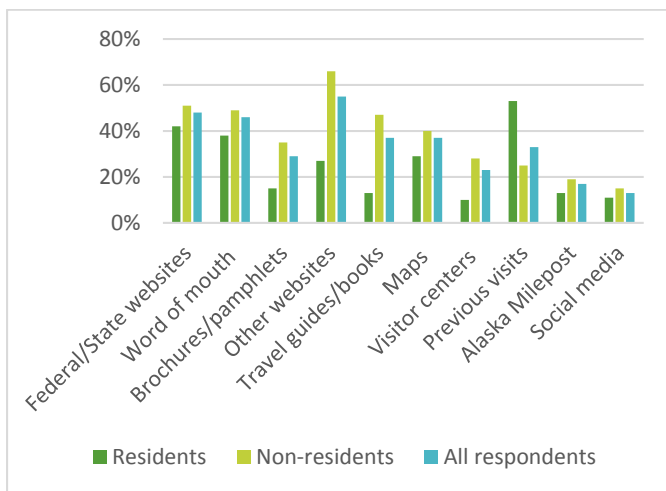
Visitation

Non-residents were more likely than residents to visit multiple FLMA sites during their trip (80% vs. 55%). On average, residents visited 2.4 FLMA sites and non-residents visited 3.2 FLMA sites. Fifty percent of respondents sampled in the Interior also visited FLMA sites in southcentral Alaska and 27% visited FLMA sites in southeast Alaska. Of those sampled in the Southcentral, 44% visited FLMA sites in the Interior, 27% visited FLMA sites in Southeast, and 24% visited FLMA sites in the Southwest. Eighteen percent of those sampled in the southeast visited FLMA sites in Southcentral and 23% visited FLMA sites in the Interior.



Information Sources Used to Plan the Trip

Respondents were presented with a list of 15 information sources and asked which they used to plan their trip. Websites were the most often used information source, with 48% of respondents using Federal or State websites and 55% using other websites. Non-residents were more likely than residents to use most sources, including websites (51% vs. 42% for Federal or State websites and 66% vs. 27% for other websites), word of mouth (49% vs. 38%), travel guides and books (47% vs. 13%), and brochures or pamphlets (35% vs. 15%). The notable exception to this pattern being that residents were more likely than non-residents to use previous visits as an information source (53% vs. 25%).



Safety Issues Researched

Thirty-five percent of respondents reported researching safety issues prior to their trip. Non-residents were significantly more likely than residents to do such research (41% vs. 20%).

If respondents indicated they researched safety measures, they were asked to explain what safety measures were researched. One hundred forty-four respondents provided explanations (20 residents and 124 non-residents). Among these respondents, the largest category of safety measures researched related to wildlife (83%), with 65% of residents and 86% of non-residents indicating they researched this issue. Seventeen of the responses related to road conditions (4 of 20 residents and 13 of 124 non-residents) and 12 responses related to communications (4 of 20 residents and 8 of 124 non-residents).

Safety Issues Experienced

When asked if they experienced a safety issue, lack of cell phone coverage was the most frequently cited safety issue experienced (38% of residents and 40% of non-residents). Other issues included:

- Wildlife (11% of residents and 14% of non-residents)
- Bad weather (23% of residents and 14% of non-residents)
- Poor road conditions (13% of residents and 11% of non-residents)

Travel Experience

Respondents were asked to provide additional feedback on their travel experience; 226 respondents (49 residents and 177 non-residents) provided comments. Thirty-one percent the comments expressed satisfaction with the travel experience. Seventy-six responses (17 residents and 59 non-residents) related to travel and/or transportation. Of these 76 responses, 10 (1 of 17 residents and 9 of 59 non-residents) expressed satisfaction with specific travel related issues (e.g., "The roads were better than expected," "The Denali Highway was pretty rough but that was to be expected") and 66 (16 of 17 residents and 50 of 59 non-residents) provided feedback on negative conditions (e.g., "poor road maintenance").

Citation for this this document:

Wedin, A., Fix, P. J., Shaw, J., Petersen, K., & Petrella, M. (2018). Summary of Collaborative Visitor Transportation Survey: Results from Summer 2016 Alaska Survey. Project report for the Alaska Long-Range Transportation Planning Team. Fairbanks, Alaska: School of Natural Resources and Extension, University of Alaska Fairbanks.

Additional information can be found in the full project report:

Fix, P. J., Wedin, A., Shaw, J., Petersen, K., & Petrella, M. (2017). Collaborative Visitor Transportation Survey: Results from Summer 2016 Alaska Survey. Project report for the Alaska Long-Range Transportation Planning Team. Fairbanks, Alaska: School of Natural Resources and Extension, University of Alaska Fairbanks.

2016 Collaborative Visitor Transportation Survey



Interior

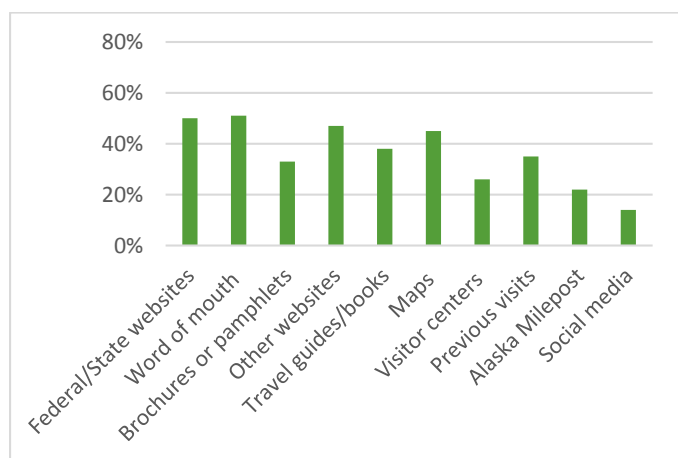


Interior Sites

Sites sampled in this region were Denali National Park, Tetlin National Wildlife Refuge, Tangle/Swede Lakes, White Mountains National Recreation Area, APLIC Fairbanks & Tok, and the Arctic IAVC. There were 983 onsite and 202 follow-up surveys completed in this region.

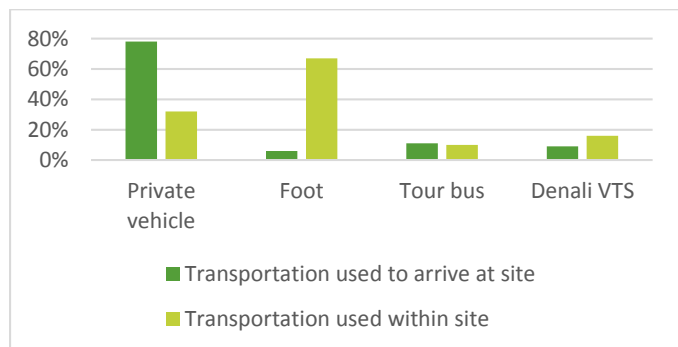
Information Sources Used in Planning the Trip

Interior respondents used a wide variety of information sources in planning their trip. Word of mouth was the most prevalent followed closely by Federal/State websites and other websites.

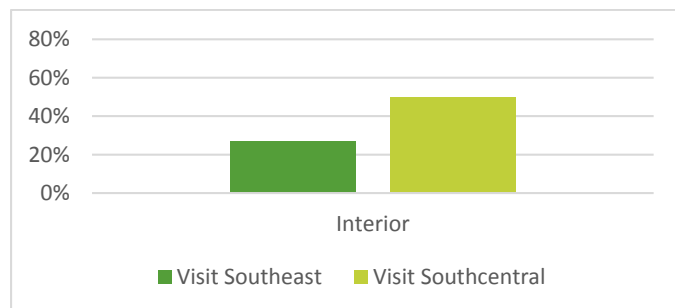


Transportation

Most of the interior respondents arrived at the site by private vehicle and traveled within the site by foot.



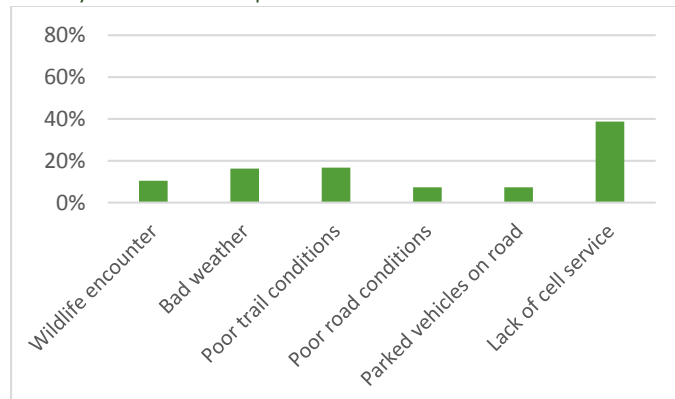
Fifty percent of respondents sampled in the Interior also visited sites in Southcentral Alaska and 27% visited sites in Southeast Alaska.



Safety

Thirty-two percent of the Interior respondents searched for safety measures prior to their trip. When asked about safety concerns experienced, lack of cell service was their top concern.

Safety Concerns Experienced



Infrastructure

Respondents were presented with 10 types of transportation/travel-related infrastructure and were asked if they would like to see "less," "the same," or "more." A "no opinion" response option was also provided. "No opinion" was a common response and was excluded from analysis. Of those expressing a preference, with the exception of trails for all-terrain vehicles, the majority of respondents preferred the current levels. Infrastructure with notable percentages of respondents indicating a preference for "more" included: trails for hiking, biking, and horseback riding (47%); campgrounds (44%); accessible friendly sites and facilities (31%); and directional or wayfinding signs (30%). A plurality of respondents (41%) indicated a preference for "the same" amount of trails for all-terrain vehicles, with 36% indicating a preference for "less" and 23% a preference for "more."

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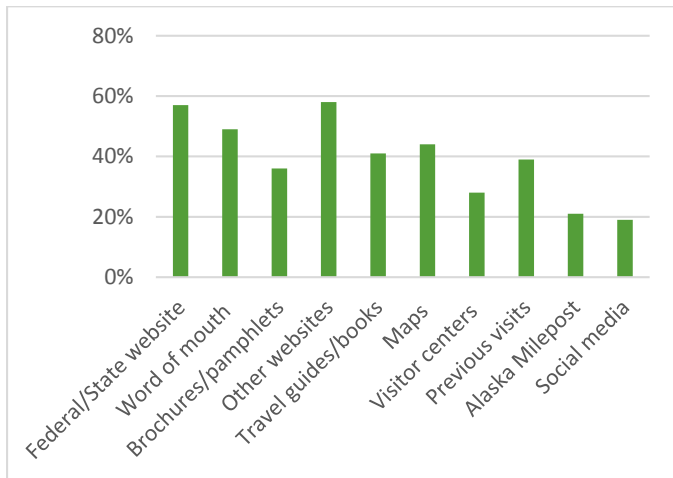
Southcentral



Anchorage and Kenai Peninsula are part of this area. Katmai National Park is also included in this region. In addition to Katmai, key sampling locations included Kenai Fjords National Park, Chugach National Forest, Kenai National Wildlife Refuge, the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge visitor center, and the APLIC Anchorage. There were 926 onsite and 174 follow-up surveys completed in this region.

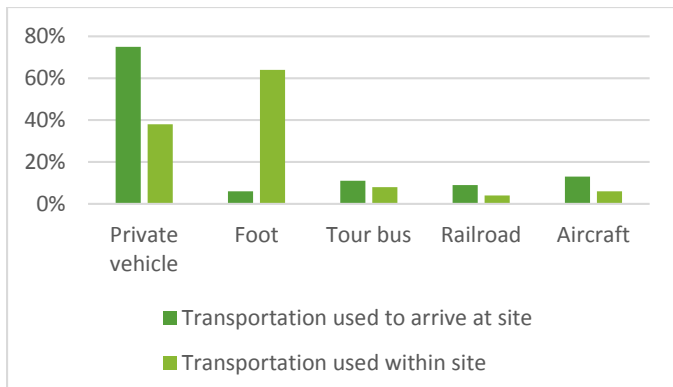
Information Sources Used in Planning the Trip

Southcentral respondents used a wide variety of information sources in planning their trip. Other websites was the most prevalent followed closely by Federal/State websites and word of mouth.

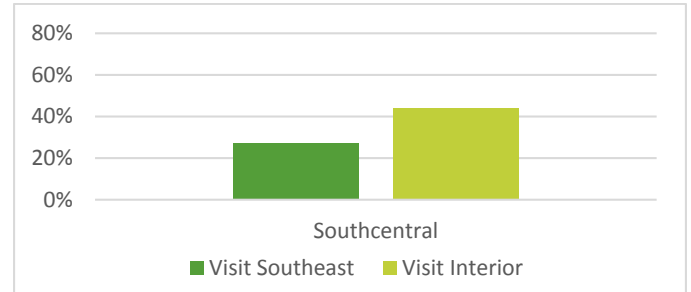


Transportation

Most of the southcentral respondents arrived at the site by private vehicle and traveled within the site by foot.



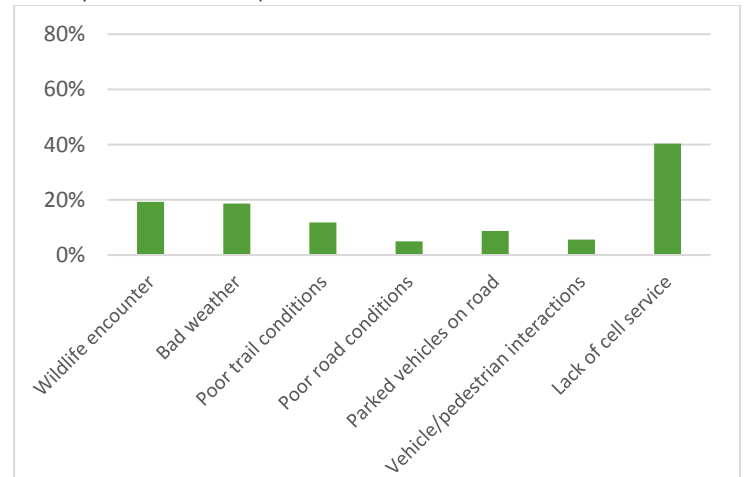
Forty-four percent of respondents sampled in Southcentral also visited sites in the Interior and 27% visited sites in Southeast Alaska.



Safety

Forty-five percent of the Southcentral respondents searched for safety measures prior to their trip. When asked about safety concerns experienced, lack of cell service was their top concern.

Safety Concerns Experienced



Infrastructure

Respondents were presented with 10 types of transportation/travel-related infrastructure and were asked if they would like to see "less," "the same," or "more." A "no opinion" response option was also provided. "No opinion" was a common response and was excluded from analysis. Of those expressing a preference, with the exception of trails for all-terrain vehicles, the majority of respondents preferred the current levels. Infrastructure with notable percentages of respondents indicating a preference for "more" included: trails for hiking, biking, and horseback riding (45%); campgrounds (31%); accessible friendly sites and facilities (34%); and directional or wayfinding signs (34%). A majority of respondents (52%) indicated a preference for "less" trails for all-terrain vehicles, with 8% indicating a preference for "more."

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Southeast

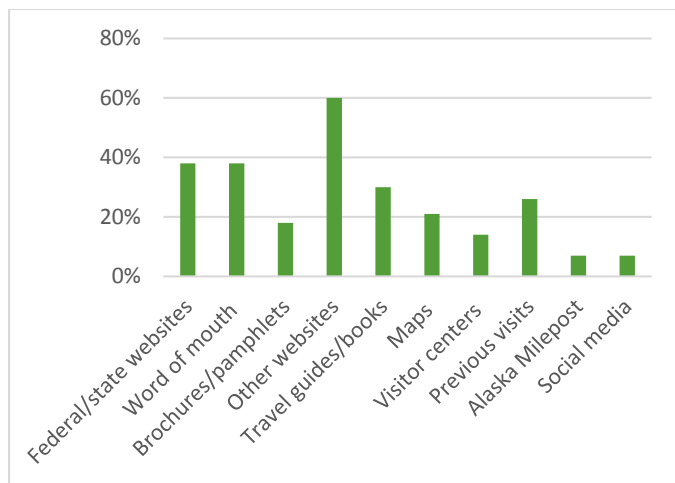


Sites sampled in this region included Klondike Gold Rush National Historic Park, Sitka National Historic Park, the Southeast Alaska Discovery Center, and several sites within the Tongass National Forest: Mendenhall Glacier, trails outside of Juneau and Ketchikan, Hoonah Ranger District, and Prince of Wales Island. There

were 887 onsite and 153 follow-up surveys completed in this region.

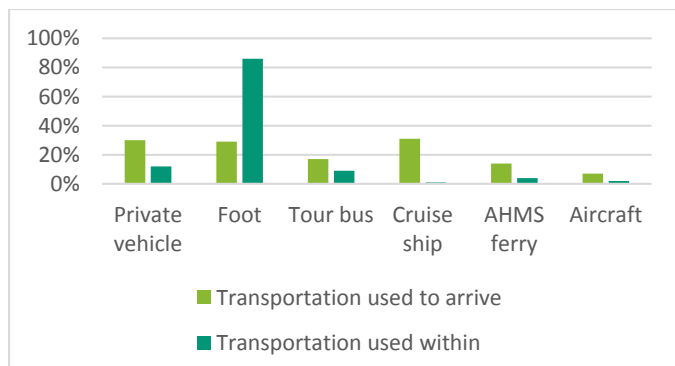
Information Sources Used in Planning the Trip

Southeast respondents used a wide variety of information sources in planning their trip. Other websites was the most prevalent, followed by Federal/State websites and word of mouth.

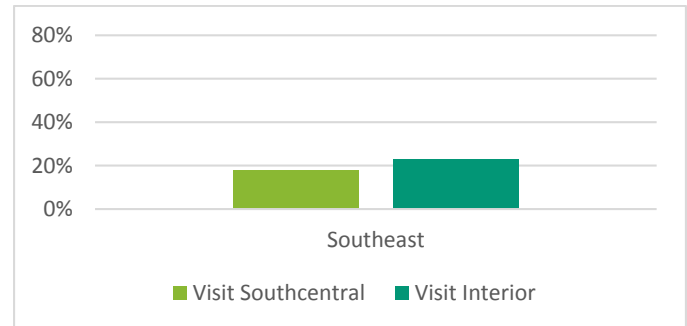


Transportation

The Southeast respondents arrived at the site primarily by private vehicle, foot, or cruise ship, and predominantly traveled within the site by foot.



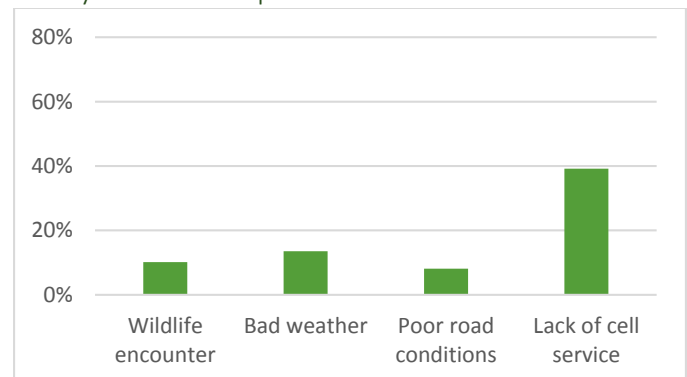
Twenty-three percent of respondents sampled in Southeast also visited sites in the Interior and 18% visited sites in Southcentral.



Safety

Thirty percent of Southeast respondents searched for safety measures prior to their trip. When asked about safety concerns experienced, lack of cell service was their top concern.

Safety Concerns Experienced



Infrastructure

Respondents were presented with 10 types of transportation/travel-related infrastructure and were asked if they would like to see "less," "the same," or "more." A "no opinion" response option was also provided. "No opinion" was a common response and was excluded from analysis. Of those expressing a preference, with the exception of trails for all-terrain vehicles, the majority of respondents preferred the current levels. Infrastructure with notable percentages of respondents indicating a preference for "more" included: trails for hiking, biking, and horseback riding (45%); campgrounds (29%); accessible friendly sites and facilities (40%); and directional or wayfinding signs (36%). A plurality of respondents (49%) indicated a preference for "less" trails for all-terrain vehicles, with 13% indicating a preference for "more."